

NEW
SERIES

JANUARY

VOL.
22

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

PART 122

PRICE
NINEPENCE.

1879

LONDON
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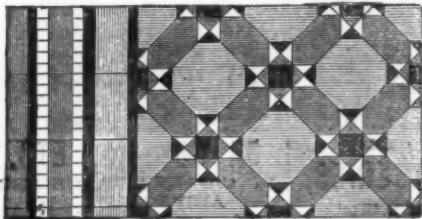
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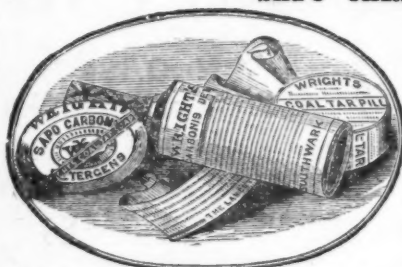
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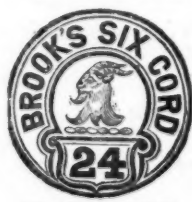
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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 527. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1879.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVIII. WEDDING GARMENTS.

AFTER that night Vixen held her peace. There were no more bitter words between Mrs. Tempest and her daughter, but the mother knew that there was a wellspring of bitterness—a Marah whose waters were inexhaustible—in her daughter's heart, and that domestic happiness, under one roof, was henceforth impossible for these two.

There were very few words of any kind between Violet and Mrs. Tempest at this time. The girl kept herself as much as possible apart from her mother. The widow lived her languid drawing-room life, dawdling away long slow days, that left no more impression behind them than the drift of rose-leaves across the velvet lawn before her windows. A little point-lace, deftly worked by slim white fingers flashing with gems; a little Tennyson; a little Owen Meredith; a little Browning—only half understood at best; a little scandal; a great deal of orange pekoe, sipped out of old Worcester teacups of royal blue; an hour's letter-writing on the last fashionable note-paper; elegantly-worded inanity, delicately penned in a flowing Italian hand, with long loops to the Y's and G's, and a serpentine curve at the end of every word.

No life could well have been more useless or vapid. Even Mrs. Tempest's charities—those doles of wine and soup, bread and clothing, which are looked for naturally from the mistress of a fine old house—were vicarious. Trimmer, the housekeeper, did everything. Indeed, in the eyes of the surrounding poor Mrs.

Trimmer was mistress of the Abbey House. It was to her they looked for relief; it was her reproof they feared; and to her they louted lowest. The faded beauty, reclining in her barouche, wrapped in white raiment of softest China crape, and whirling past them in a cloud of dust, was as remote as a goddess. They could hardly have realised the fact that she was fashioned out of the same clay that made themselves.

Upon so smooth and eventless an existence Captain Winstanley's presence came like a gust of north wind across the sultry languor of an August noontide. His energy, his prompt, resolute manner of thinking and acting upon all occasions, impressed Mrs. Tempest with an extraordinary sense of his strength of mind and manliness. She must always be safe where he was. No danger, no difficulty, could assail her while his strong arm was there to ward it off. She felt very much as Mary Stuart may have done about Bothwell; when, moved to scornful aversion by the silken boy-profligate Darnley, her heart acknowledged its master in the dark freebooter who had slain him. There had been no Darnley in Pamela Tempest's life, but this resolute, clear-brained soldier was her Bothwell. She had the Mary Stuart temperament, the love of compliments and fine dresses, dainty needlework and luxurious living, without the Stuart craft. In Conrad Winstanley she had found her master, and she was content to be so mastered; willing to lay down her little sum of power at his feet, and live henceforward like a tame falcon at the end of a string. Her position, as a widow, was an excellent one. The squire's will had been dictated in fullest

confidence in his wife's goodness and discretion; and doubtless also with the soothing idea common to most hale and healthy men, that it must be a long time before their testamentary arrangements can come into effect. It was a holograph will, and the squire's own composition throughout. He would have no lawyer's finger in that pie, he had said. The will had cost him many hours of painful thought before he rang the bell for his bailiff and his butler, and executed it in their presence.

Mrs. Tempest was mistress of the Abbey House for her life; and at her death it was to become Violet's property. Violet was not to come of age until she was twenty-five, and till then her mother was to be her sole guardian, and absolute mistress of everything. There was no question of an allowance for the maintenance of the heiress, no question as to the accumulation of income. Everything was to belong to Mrs. Tempest till Violet came of age. She had only to educate and maintain her daughter, in whatever manner she might think fit. At Violet's majority the estate was to pass into her possession, charged with an income of fifteen hundred a year, to be paid to the widow for her lifetime. Until her twenty-fifth birthday, therefore, Violet was in the position of a child, entirely dependent on her mother's liberality, and bound to obey her mother as her natural and only guardian. There was no court of appeal nearer than the Court of Chancery. There was no trustee or executor to whom the two women could make their complaints or refer their differences.

Naturally, Captain Winstanley had long before this made himself acquainted with the particulars of the squire's will. For six years he saw himself sole master of a very fine estate, and at the end of six years reduced to an income which seemed, comparatively, a pittance, and altogether inadequate for the maintenance of such a place as the Abbey House. Still, fifteen hundred a year and the Abbey House were a long way on the right side of nothing; and Captain Winstanley felt that he had fallen on his feet.

That was a dreary June for Vixen. She hugged her sorrow, and lived in a mental solitude which was almost awful in so young a soul. She made a confidante of no one, not even of kind-hearted Fanny Scobel, who was quite ready to pity her and condole with her, and who was secretly indignant at the widow's folly.

The fact of Mrs. Tempest's intended marriage had become known to all her friends and neighbours, with the usual effect of such intelligence. Society said sweet things to her; and praised Captain Winstanley; and hoped the wedding would be soon; and opined that it would be quite a nice thing for Miss Tempest to have such an agreeable stepfather, with whom she could ride to hounds as she had done with the dear squire. And the same society, driving away from the Abbey House in its landaus and pony-carriages, after half an hour's pleasant gossip and a cup of delicately-flavoured tea, called Mrs. Tempest a fool, and her intended husband an adventurer.

Vixen kept aloof from all the gossip and tea-drinking. She did not even go near her old friends the Scobels, in these days of smothered wrath and slow consuming indignation. She deserted the schools, her old pensioners, even the little village children, to whom she had loved to carry baskets of good things, and pocketful of halfpence, and whose queer country dialect had seemed as sweet to her as the carolling of finches and blackbirds in the woods. Everything in the way of charity was left to Mrs. Trimmer now. Vixen took her long solitary rides in the woods, roaming wherever there was a footway for her horse under the darkening beeches, dangerously near the swampy ground where the wet grass shone in the sunlight, the green reedy patches that meant peril; into the calm unfathomable depths of Mark Ash, or Queen's Bower; up to the wild heathy crest of Boldrewood; wherever there was loneliness and beauty.

Roderick had gone to London for the season, and was riding with Lady Mabel in the Row, or dancing attendance at garden-parties, exhibitions, and flower-shows.

"I wonder how he likes the dusty days, and the crowded rooms, the classical music, and high-art exhibitions?" thought Vixen savagely. "I wonder how he likes being led about like a Pomeranian terrier? I don't think I could endure it if I were a man. But I suppose when one is in love——"

And then Vixen thought of their last talk together, and how little of the lover's enthusiasm there was in Roderick's mention of his cousin.

"In the bottom of my heart I know that he is going to marry her for the sake of her estate, or because his mother wished it, and urged it, and he was too weak-

minded to go on saying No. I would not say it for the world, or let anyone else say it in my hearing, but, in my heart of hearts, I know he does not love her."

And then, after a thoughtful silence, she cried to the mute unresponsive woods:

"Oh, it is wicked, abominable, mad, to marry without love!"

The woods spoke to her of Roderick Vawdrey. How often she had ridden by his side beneath these spreading beech boughs, dipping her childish head, just as she dipped it to-day, under the low branches, steering her pony carefully between the prickly holly bushes, plunging deep into the hollows where the dry leaves crackled under his hoofs.

"I fancied Rorie and I were to spend our lives together—somehow," she said to herself. "It seems very strange for us to be quite parted."

She saw Mr. Vawdrey's name in the fashionable newspapers, in the lists of guests at dinners and draws. London life suited him very well, no doubt. She heard that he was a member of the Four-in-hand Club, and turned out in splendid style at Hyde Park Corner. There was no talk yet of his going into Parliament. That was an affair of the future.

Since that evening on which Mrs. Tempest announced her intention of taking a second husband, Violet and Captain Winstanley had only met in the presence of other people. The captain had tried to infuse a certain fatherly familiarity into his manner; but Vixen had met every attempt at friendliness with a sullen disdain, which kept even Captain Winstanley at arm's length.

"We shall understand each other better by-and-by," he said to himself, galled by this coldness. "It would be a pity to disturb these halcyon days by anything in the way of a scene. I shall know how to manage Miss Tempest—afterwards."

He spoke of her, and to her, always as Miss Tempest. He had never called her Violet since that night in the Pavilion garden.

These days before her wedding were indeed a halcyon season for Mrs. Tempest. She lived in an atmosphere of millinery and pretty speeches. Her attention was called away from a ribbon by the sweet distraction of a compliment, and oscillated between tender whispers and Honiton lace. Conrad Winstanley was a delightful lover. His enemies would have said that he had done the same kind of thing so often, that

it would have been strange if he had not done it well. His was assuredly no 'prentice hand in the art. Poor Mrs. Tempest lived in a state of mild intoxication, as dreamily delicious as the effects of opium. She was enchanted with her lover, and still better pleased with herself. At nine-and-thirty it was very sweet to find herself exercising so potent an influence over the captain's strong nature. She could not help comparing herself to Cleopatra, and the captain to Antony. If he had not thrown away a world for her sake, he was at least ready to abandon the busy career which a man loves, and to devote his future existence to rural domesticity. He confessed that he had been hardened by much contact with the world, that he did not love now for the first time; but he told his betrothed that her influence had awakened feelings that had never before been called into life, that this love which he felt for her was to all intents and purposes a first love, the first pure and perfect affection that had subjugated and elevated his soul.

After that night in Mrs. Tempest's boudoir, it was only by tacit avoidance of her mother, that Vixen showed the intensity of her disapproval. If she could have done any good by reproof or entreaty, by pleading or exhortation, she would assuredly have spoken: but she saw the captain and her mother together every day, and she knew that, opposed to his influence, her words were like the idle wind which bloweth where it listeth. So she held her peace, and looked on with an aching, angry heart, and hated the intruder who had come to steal her dead father's place. To take her father's place; that in Violet's mind was the unpardonable wrong. That any man should enter that house as master, and sit in the squire's seat, and rule the squire's servants, and ride the squire's horses, was an outrage beyond endurance. She might have looked more leniently on her mother's folly, had the widow chosen a second husband with a house and home of his own, who would have carried off his wife to reign over his own belongings, and left the Abbey House desolate, a temple dedicated to the dead.

Mrs. Tempest's manner towards her daughter during this period was at once conciliatory and reproachful. She felt it a hard thing that Violet should have taken up such an obnoxious position. This complaint she repeated piteously, with many variations, when she discussed Violet's

unkindness with her lover. She had no secrets from the captain, and she told him all the bitter things Violet had said about him.

He heard her with firmly-set lips and an angry sparkle in his dark eyes, but his tone was full of paternal indulgence presently, when Mrs. Tempest had poured out all her woes.

"Is it not hard upon me, Conrad?" she asked in conclusion.

"My dear Pamela, I hope you are too strong-minded to distress yourself seriously about a wilful girl's foolishness. Your daughter has a noble nature, but she has been spoiled by too much indulgence. Even a racehorse—the noblest thing in creation—has to be broken in; not always without severe punishment. Miss Tempest and I will come to understand each other perfectly by-and-by."

"I know you will be a second father to her," said Mrs. Tempest tearfully.

"I will do my duty to her, dearest, be assured."

Still Mrs. Tempest went on harping upon the cruelty of her daughter's conduct. The consciousness of Violet's displeasure weighed heavily upon her.

"I dare not even show her my trousseau," she complained; "all confidence is at an end between us. I should like to have had her opinion about my dresses—though she is sadly deficient in taste, poor child! and has never even learnt to put on her gloves perfectly."

"And your own taste is faultless, love," replied the captain soothingly. "What can you want with advice from an inexperienced girl, whose mind is in the stable?"

"It is not her advice I want, Conrad; but her sympathy. Fanny Scobel is coming this afternoon. I can show her my things. I really feel quite nervous about talking to Violet of her own dress. She must have a new dress for the wedding, you know; though she cannot be a bridesmaid. I think that is really unfair. Don't you, Conrad?"

"What is unfair, dearest?" asked the captain, whose mind had scarcely followed the harmless meanderings of his lady's speech.

"That a widow is not allowed to have bridesmaids or orange-blossoms. It seems like taking the poetry out of a wedding, does it not?"

"Not to my mind, Pamela. The poetry of wedlock does not lie in these details—

a sugared cake, and satin favours; a string of carriages, and a Brussels' veil. The true poetry of marriage is in the devotion and fidelity of the two hearts it binds together."

Mrs. Tempest sighed gently, and was almost resigned to be married without bridesmaids or orange-blossoms.

It was now within a month of the wedding, which was to be solemnised on the last day of August—a convenient season for a honeymoon tour in Scotland. Mrs. Tempest liked to travel when other people travelled. Mountain and flood would have had scarcely any charm for her "out of the season." The time had come when Violet's dress must be talked about, as Mrs. Tempest told the vicar's wife solemnly. She had confided the secret of her daughter's unkindness to Mrs. Scobel, in the friendly hour of afternoon tea.

"It is very hard upon me," she repeated—"very hard that the only drawback to my happiness should come from my own child."

"Violet was so fond of her father," said Mrs. Scobel excusingly.

"But is that any reason she should treat me unkindly? Who could have been fonder of dear Edward than I was? I studied his happiness in everything. There never was an unkind word between us. I do not think anyone could expect me to go down to my grave a widow, in order to prove my affection for my dearest Edward. That was proved by every act of my married life. I have nothing to regret, nothing to atone for. I feel myself free to reward Captain Winstanley's devotion. He has followed me from place to place for the last two years; and has remained constant, in spite of every rebuff. He proposed to me three times before I accepted him."

Mrs. Scobel had been favoured with the history of these three separate offers more than once.

"I know, dear Mrs. Tempest," she said somewhat hurriedly, lest her friend should recapitulate the details. "He certainly seems very devoted. But, of course, from a worldly point of view, you are an excellent match for him."

"Do you think I would marry him if I thought that consideration had any weight with him?" demanded Mrs. Tempest indignantly. And Mrs. Scobel could say no more.

There are cases of physical blindness

past the skill of surgery, but there is no blindness more incurable than that of a woman on the verge of forty who fancies herself beloved.

"But Violet's dress for the wedding," said Mrs. Scobel, anxious to get the conversation upon easier ground. "Have you really said nothing to her about it?"

"No. She is so headstrong and self-willed, I have been absolutely afraid to speak. But it must be settled immediately. Theodore is always so busy. It will be quite a favour to get it done at so short a notice, I daresay."

"Why not speak to Violet this afternoon?"

"While you are here? Yes, I might do that," replied Mrs. Tempest eagerly.

She felt that she could approach the subject more comfortably in Mrs. Scobel's presence. There would be a kind of protection in a third person. She rang the bell.

"Has Miss Tempest come home from her ride?"

"Yes, ma'am. She has just come in."

"Send her to me at once then. Ask her not to stop to change her dress."

Mrs. Tempest and Mrs. Scobel were in the drawing-room, sitting at a gipsy-table before an open window; the widow wrapped in a China-crape shawl, lest even the summer breeze should be too chill for her delicate frame; the Worcester cups and saucers, and antique silver teapot and caddy, and kettle set out before her, like a child's toys.

Violet came running in, flushed after her ride, her habit muddy.

"Bogged again!" cried Mrs. Tempest, with ineffable disgust. "That horse will be the death of you some day."

"I think not, mamma. How do you do, Mrs. Scobel?"

"Violet," said the vicar's wife gravely, "why do you never come to our weekday services now?"

"I—I—don't know. I've not felt in the humour for coming to church. It's no use to come and kneel in a holy place with rebellious thoughts in my heart. I come on Sundays for decency's sake; but I think it's better to keep away from the week-day services till I am in a better temper."

"I don't think that's quite the way to recover your temper, dear."

Violet was silent, and there was a rather awkward pause.

"Will you have a cup of tea, dear?" asked Mrs. Tempest.

"No, thanks, mamma. I think, unless you have something very particular to say to me, I had better take my muddy habit off your carpet. I feel rather warm and dusty. I shall be glad to change my dress."

"But I have something very particular to say, Violet. I won't detain you long. You'd better have a cup of tea."

"Just as you please, mamma."

And forgetful of her clay-bespattered habit, Violet sank into one of the satin-covered chairs, and made a wreck of an antimaccassar worked in crewels by Mrs. Tempest's own hands.

"I am going to write to Madame Theodore by this evening's post, Violet," said her mother, handing her a cup of tea, and making believe not to see the destruction of that exquisite antimaccassar; "and I should like to order your dress for—the—wedding. I have been thinking that cream-colour and pale blue would suit you to perfection. A cream-coloured hat—the Vandyke shape—with a long blue ostrich—"

"Please don't take any trouble about it, mamma," said Vixen, whose cheek had paled at the word "wedding," and who now sat very erect in her chair, holding her cup and saucer firmly. "I am not going to be present at your wedding, so I shall not want a dress."

"Violet!" cried Mrs. Tempest, beginning to tremble. "You cannot mean what you say. You have been very unkind, very undutiful. You have made me perfectly miserable for the last seven weeks: but I cannot believe that you would—grossly insult me—by refusing to be present at my wedding."

"I do not wish to insult you, mamma. I am very sorry if I have pained you; but I cannot and will not be present at a marriage the very idea of which is hateful to me. If my presence could give any sanction to this madness of yours, that sanction shall not be given."

"Violet, have you thought what you are doing? Have you considered what will be said—by the world?"

"I think the world—our world—must have made up its mind about your second marriage already, mamma," Vixen answered quietly. "My absence from your wedding can make very little difference."

"It will make a very great difference; and you know it," cried Mrs. Tempest, roused to as much passion as she was capable of feeling. "People will say that

my daughter sets her face against my marriage—my daughter, who ought to sympathise with me, and rejoice that I have found a true friend and protector.”

“I cannot either sympathise or rejoice, mamma. It is much better that I should stop away from your wedding. I should look miserable, and make other people uncomfortable.”

“Your absence will humiliate and lower me in the sight of my friends. It will be a disgrace. And you take this course on purpose to wound and injure me. You are a wicked undutiful daughter.”

“Oh, mamma!” cried Vixen, with grave voice and reproachful eyes—eyes before whose steady gaze the tearful widow drooped and trembled; “is duty so one-sided? Do I owe all to you, and you nothing to me? My father left us together, mother and daughter, to be all the world to each other. He left us mistresses of the dear old home we had shared with him. Do you think he meant a stranger to come and sit in his place—to be master over all he loved? Do you think it ever entered his mind that in three little years his place would be filled by the first-comer—his daughter asked to call another man father?”

“The first-comer!” whimpered Mrs. Tempest. “Oh, this is too cruel!”

“Violet!” exclaimed Mrs. Scobel reprovingly; “when you are calmer you will be sorry for having spoken so unkindly to your dear mamma.”

“I shall not be sorry for having spoken the truth,” said Violet. “Mamma has heard the truth too seldom in her life. She will not hear it from Captain Winstanley—yet awhile.”

And after flinging this last poisoned dart, Vixen took up the muddy skirt of her habit and left the room.

“It was rather a pity that Arion and I did not go to the bottom of that bog and stay there,” she reflected. “I don’t think anybody wants us above ground.”

“Did you ever know anything so humiliating, so shameful, so undutiful?” demanded Mrs. Tempest piteously, as the door closed on her rebellious daughter. “What will people say if Violet is not at my wedding?”

“It would be awkward, certainly; unless there were some good reason for her absence.”

“People are so ill-natured. Nobody would believe in any excuse that was made. That cruel girl will disgrace me.”

“She seems strongly prejudiced against Captain Winstanley. It is a great pity. But I daresay she will relent in time. If I were you, dear Mrs. Tempest, I should order the dress.”

“Would you really, Fanny?”

“Yes; I should order the dress, and trust in providence for the result. You may be able to bring her round somehow between now and the wedding.”

“But I am not going to humiliate myself. I am not going to be trampled on by my daughter.”

“Of course not; but you must have her at your wedding.”

“If I were to tell Captain Winstanley what she has said this afternoon——”

“He would be very angry, no doubt. But I would not tell him if I were you.”

“No, I shall not say anything about it.”

Yet, before night, Captain Winstanley had heard every syllable that Vixen had said; with some trifling and unconscious exaggerations, hardly to be avoided by a woman of Mrs. Tempest’s character, in the narration of her own wrongs.

A PICTURE OF SPANISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

It has frequently occurred to me during a lengthened residence in Spain, how little is really known in England of the people who have their homes south of the Pyrenees. Indeed, Europe, to most travellers, would appear to end at the foot of this mountain barrier, for beyond Queen’s messengers, an occasional newspaper correspondent, and a limited number of commercial agents, few seem to make their way into the comparatively ignored land of Iberia. Those tourists whose curiosity leads them to explore the country of the Cid, rarely leave the beaten track of railways and high roads. They travel with a guide book, a dialogue and pocket dictionary; they loiter for a fortnight in the capital, and catch a passing glimpse of those cities that line the frequented routes. With few exceptions, they are entirely unacquainted with the Castilian tongue, hotels afford them a brief shelter, and their knowledge of the customs and manners of the people is gleaned in the streets and cafés, the bull-ring, and other places of public resort. As to the inner life, culture, and general social ethics of the Spaniard, the great bulk of tourists know next to nothing. How should it be

otherwise? Unknown, and as I have suggested, probably ignorant of the language, his sole intercourse is with railway officials, carriage-drivers, guides, and innkeepers. In most cases he has not come with an introduction to any of the dwellers in the land, and he remains, as it were, in the outer court, staring up at the façade of the house, but never crossing the threshold. The customs of Spanish society are prohibitory, and few, unfranked, are likely to pass the barrier where pompous etiquette mounts guard. Undoubtedly there are a privileged few whose position in the world of fashion acts as an "open sesame," but these only elbow their way through the ranks of the Spanish "upper ten;" in reality, very much like jostling the throng which fills, during the respective seasons, the salons of Paris and London. In addition, I may mention the English colonies which cluster about Bilbao, Barcelona, and the sherry districts of Andalucia; but these, I take it, live very much within their own circles, attend to their own business, and contribute very little to the information of their fellow-countrymen at home. In the district where I have fixed my residence during the past year, I have not seen a passing Englishman, and the oldest inhabitant but preserves a vague notion of our nationality, from the fact that a division of Wellington's army halted in the town for a brief rest, when driving the French across the Pyrenees.

It must not be imagined for a moment, that I assume to thoroughly fill the blank which seems to me to exist. Still, I think I may be able to add somewhat to the incomplete Spanish notes, which, from time to time, have been put in circulation. My experiences are of Northern Spain especially, and for more than four years I have wandered from province to province, lingering in towns during the hard winter months, and with the dawn of summer afoot again, roaming over plains and through mountain valleys, at times climbing to thousands of feet in the bright joyous atmosphere, then descending to chill deep gorges, seldom illumined by a fleeting ray of sunlight. I have ever sojourned with the people, following their mode of life; and whether my home has been within the walls of a city, a county pueblo, or a solitary mountain caserio, I have invariably identified myself with those whom chance, for the time, had made my companions. Tillers of the earth and shopkeepers, contrabandistas

and government officials, priests and deputies, the upper ten and lower millions, all have in turn been my associates. Such then having been my opportunities for learning something of the Spanish life of to-day, I dare venture the result of my gleanings, desiring honestly to produce a picture true to colour and faithful in the rendering of the models which have served me.

As I have already mentioned, my residence during the past year has been stationary, San Fulano being the town in which I have taken up my abode. I had, perhaps, best make the statement here, that San Fulano will not be found indicated on any map of Spain, or inscribed in the voluminous list of saints. When a Spaniard, in conversation, desires to convey that some fictitious individual was the hero of such or such an event, he uses the term Don Fulano, just as we, for instance, would say in England, Mr. Thingamy. My object in thus veiling the real name of my present home is to shield myself from reprisals should, by chance, this paper attract the attention of Spanish publicists, and find its way back to the Peninsula, printed in the Castilian tongue. Such an occurrence is quite amongst the possibilities, and so with a view to making myself safe, I have decided to give the genuine saint an alias.

It was towards the close of a sultry June day that I looked down on San Fulano from a mountain height; it lay, creamlike in its whiteness, on the banks of a silvery river, which wound its way through a charming valley, all green and gold with emerald foliage and ripening harvest. "There," said I, "is the spot where, for the present, my wanderings shall end;" and tightening my waist-scarf, I commenced a rough descent. From early morn to dewy eve, I climbed and strode over eight Spanish leagues of difficult country, and it was with intense satisfaction that I stretched my limbs, in half reclining posture, beneath the stone archway of the house to which I had been recommended. The master of the establishment, quite an imposing caballero in his manner, had, on my advent, placed a chair, himself, and his belongings at my disposal, which courtesy was immediately followed by the offer of a cigarette. As to terms for board and residence, those were matters with which he had no concern; he would summon the senora, and no doubt she would be honoured in receiving me

beneath their roof. Well, the senora was pleased to fall into an arrangement, and so for a year I have formed one of the family of the Zubicoas.

San Fulano has its site in the heart of a Spanish Switzerland. The lakes alone are missing. But there are shimmering rivers and brawling torrents; richly wooded mountains and bald rugged peaks; narrow winding valleys, which at each bend disclose some new beauty; and, what is its chief boon, balmy breezes that rustle through the gorges, skimming the cool rushing waters, and tempering the fierce Iberian summer heat; so that, from June to September, the town and its neighbourhood are colonised by emigrants from the south, eager to escape from the scorched plains of Castile, and the suffocating atmosphere of Andalucia. Many wealthy families of Madrid have here their country residences, and for four months in the year San Fulano is the centre of vagabondising fashion and political intrigue.

I have said that San Fulano first disclosed itself to me "creamlike in its whiteness," but I afterwards discovered it was the whiteness of the sepulchre. With the exception of a cluster of palacios on the northern outskirt, which form its limited Belgravia, it is odoriferously foul and picturesquely rotten. The massive stone basements of many of the houses date back five hundred years, and are still grimly solid, though somewhat sunken by their weight of centuries. The upper portions have in most instances been patched and repatched; yet still by the side of what is here considered a modern improvement—probably a casement and balcony a hundred and fifty years old—may be seen narrow, pointed, granite, carved apertures, pierced in a wall from two to three feet in thickness. These are unglazed, and are closed by a shutter, which in turn has a small grated opening. The varied façades of these decrepit buildings are wonderfully rich in quaint detail, with their rusty iron and worm-eaten wooden balconies, oddly perched here and there. From these usually float in the sun-glare multi-coloured garments and rainbow-hued draperies, protected from a passing shower by the deeply projecting roofs of moss-grown, fluted tiling. The streets, which are narrow and roughly paved with shapeless boulders, are monopolised by the pigs. Indeed, so arrogant are the brutes, that the question as to who is to take the wall

or the gutter, is only settled by a stout stick. It may be guessed what is the ordinary condition of the streets when such scavengers make them their favourite foraging-ground. There is usually but one common entrance to each house for cattle and humanity, and this is through a deeply-set stone archway which leads directly to the stable, and consequently one is continually stepping over foul litter. If the proprietor be a tradesman, there is an opening to the tienda or shop, either to the left or right, beneath this gloomy stench-infected porch; and on the opposite side is the dark staircase which leads to the upper portion of the straggling building, where perhaps many families have their dwelling. Now, as in most instances each family keeps its pigs, and a yoke of oxen to till a patch of land in the neighbourhood of the town, it may be imagined what is the condition of the common stable at night, and what savoury odours pervade the ever-open staircase and corridors. Indeed, it has often happened to me, when paying a visit, to stumble over a sow and her young on a dark landing, or while groping my way up the time-worn uncertain stairs, to place my hand in the midst of a group of roosting fowls; and yet possibly the person to whom my visit was to be paid boasted of blue blood, was as proud as the proudest of hidalgos, and bore a shield with quarterings that dated from the heroic period of San Ferdinand or the Cid Campeador. With regard to the furniture of a suite of rooms occupied by such a person of quality, the less said the better. One seldom meets with any attempt at luxury, and most frequently even comfort is ignored. So far as I am personally concerned, I have little to complain of, for the family with whom I reside own the house and admit no other tenants; and as the building is roomy, well-aired, and comparatively modern, I esteem myself fortunate beyond my neighbours.

San Fulano has a plaza, one side of which is taken up by the church, having for belfry a Moorish tower over a thousand years old. There is also a fine open pelota-ground, or what we should term in England a tennis-court, and close at hand stands the casino. We are now at the northern outskirt or fashionable quarter, where rise the more pretentious residences of the summer visitors from Madrid and the south; and here branch off, by the river side, charming shady paseos

from which an occasional glimpse may be had of outlying caserías, embowered in verdure, and shining out in the sunlight, like opals in rich emerald settings. From every point one has only to glance upwards, and towering heights meet the eye.

How often, at early morn, have I thrown wide the jalousies, to gaze out on rose-tinted granite pinnacles, that rise from the lower forest slopes to catch the first blush of day. Sometimes at this hour the valley is flooded by a sea of silvery mist, above which pierce the bald summits, like islands of pink coral; and then, when climbing Phœbus warms him to his work, the vapour is riven, to float away in tinted clouds, and field, wood, and river awaken joyously to the golden light. Again, at eventime, comes the rich carmine glow with which the sinking sun flushes the circling mountains, and, later on, the quaint upper gables of San Fulano stand out aflame, in the yellow light of the early moon. Then in the still atmosphere may be heard the inspiriting tones of the guitar and mandolin, marking the time of the jota Aragonese or the Habanera; or perhaps, from a balcony, come the lingering tremulous notes of an Andalusian romance, which rise and die in lengthened waves of almost oriental harmony, for the Moor has left his traces in the land. Finally, when tertulias are at an end, when the casino has closed its doors on the last loiterer, and when the life of the pueblo is hushed, those who court sleep in vain may lull themselves with the unceasing murmur of the river waters, broken in upon at intervals by the chant of the sereno, who proclaims the hour and condition of the night. Such is San Fulano, which is to serve me as studio for my picture of Spanish life, and I could not have chosen a better.

The permanent residents of San Fulano and its neighbourhood may be divided into three classes: the aristocracy of independent means, the tradesmen, and the tillers of the land. Those who come under the head of aristocracy, are, with few exceptions, parvenus of fortune, who by early and successful enterprises, either in Spain or the colonies, have acquired a competency which permits them to pass in idleness their after life. Let it be understood that "successful enterprises" has a Castilian meaning, which is far from indicating legitimate commercial transactions. A government appointment, for instance, well manipulated, will produce

a great deal more than the salary which accompanies it. The ethics that rule in Spanish official life do not seem to condemn the diverting of public funds from their proper channel, to enrich those to whom the interests of the nation are confided. All of these, however, have not made what Yankee "industrials" would term "their pile." Some among the number have been faint-hearted in their plunder, and have sought safety in early flight, eking out a pretentious existence on an exceedingly limited capital. A few may have really gained their independency by lucky speculations in Cuba or on the South American continent; and I know of one spare, aged, yellow caballero, who has retired on a by no means despicable fortune, gained by running dusky human cargoes into the bays and inlets of the greater of the Antilles.

There is a lesser number, making up the aristocratic group, which boasts of pure blue blood, enriched by the unmixed dye of centuries. But then Hidalguía is so common in northern Spain that really it ceases to be a distinction. Indeed, I know of some pueblos in which every man claims to be of noble descent; yet, for all that, they go to their work in the fields, patched and dirty. The daily banquet is a garlic-flavoured bean soup, strengthened with rancid oil; and the luxuries, an idle moment, a cigarette, and a ray of sunshine. But the hidalgos of San Fulano are not reduced to such straits, though they are infinitely poorer than most of the members of the parvenu aristocracy. However, all alike are insufferably proud, and it is next to impossible for a stranger, brought into chance communication with them, to get beyond the lofty, complimentary style in which they place themselves at his disposal. Their offers of service are profuse and florid. There is nothing they possess that may not apparently be yours, and yet there is not a single honest intention in the whole of their frothy professions. Indeed, the wholesale use of meaningless compliments is common to all, from the simple citizen to the highest grandee; and from his earliest days the Spanish child is taught to round off periods of speech, of which he soon learns the emptiness. By such tuition his character, in after years, grows to be artificial, and even false; a mode of outward expression being acquired by long habit which is at variance with the innermost thought. As an instance of this extravagant mode of paying

compliments, I will quote a few specimens as an example.

A stranger is just rising from a fonda dinner-table, perfectly satisfied, and with his whole mind bent on coffee, a cigar, and digestion. Before he has well pushed back his chair a new guest enters, and takes his place at a cover which has been prepared for him. Prior to dipping his spoon in the soup, the last-mentioned, with a bow and imposing flourish, will address him who has just dined as follows: "Le gustar a usted repetir, caballero?" which means, "Will it please you to recommence?" The stereotyped answer to such an invitation is: "Muchas gracias, caballero, buen provecho"—"Many thanks, may you profit by the meal." Now this has certainly no meaning. The man who is about to dine knows well enough that he who has just satisfied his hunger would not dream of beginning again, unless he happened to be a most surprising glutton; and though he studiously replies to the compliment, he is utterly indifferent as to whether the repast be followed by an indigestion or not. And yet these two men would regard, each the other, as awfully ill-bred were the form not gone through. Again, you may perhaps incautiously admire a handsomely-mounted walking-stick; upon which its possessor, presenting it, says: "A la disposicion de usted"—"It is entirely at your service," and even presses it upon him. Of course you know he means nothing of the kind, and you reply that it could not be in better hands. This reminds me of an incident which happened to an American friend of mine some time since in Seville. He had a letter of introduction to a grandee in that city, and one morning he went to present it, accompanied by his interpreter. He was received with overwhelming courtesy; his host, besides placing himself entirely at his service, added: "Aqui tiene su casa." The interpreter explained to the visitor that the count not only placed himself but his house at his guest's disposal. "Waal, now, that's mighty kind of him," replied the Missourian; "it seems a right pretty place, and I'll pack up and have the trunks sent down." When he learned that this was merely a complimentary mode of expression, he set to bowing in a spineless fashion to the count, who gravely returned the salutations. Having been led through the house and grounds, the count finally introduced his visitor to the stables, and

there my friend expressed a genuine, unreserved admiration for a magnificent pair of Andalusian carriage-horses. He was immediately assured that he might look upon them as his own. Turning to the interpreter, who had faithfully translated the complimentary offer, he said: "Look here now, I'm just sick to death of all this; I haven't admired a single thing that hasn't been placed at my disposal. You tell the count that I accept, and that I'll send a man from the hotel to fetch 'em along." The interpreter protested, but the Missourian insisted. The count, like a well-bred grandee, simply raised his brow and bowed his head, and with mutual salutations the visit came to an end. Well, on reaching the hotel, the American sent a man with a written message for the horses, and much to his surprise, they were forthcoming; the count being infinitely too great a gentleman to enter into explanations, though doubtlessly he ground his teeth, and looked upon the Missourian as a barbarous western savage, incapable of appreciating the high-toned breeding of a Spanish nobleman. Then my friend summoned the interpreter, and dictated the following note:

"COUNT,—It has been explained to me that it is the custom in Spain to say one thing and mean another. This being the case, I have come to the conclusion that you did not really intend making a present of your horses, which I now return by bearer.

"You see I might have made a mistake and kept them.—I have the honour to be,
" &c. &c. &c."

The Missourian never again saw the inside of the count's palacio.

As another example, we will presume a caballero pays a visit, and it is the senora of the house who receives him. In this instance the language of flowery compliment becomes more extravagant than ever, and most frequently there is nothing natural in the way of conversation. On rising to take leave, the caballero, with a low inclination, exclaims: "Á los pies de usted, senora"—"Behold me at your feet, madam;" to which comes the gracious reply: "Bese usted la mano, caballero"—"I kiss your hand, sir."

Now it must not be imagined that this excessive courtliness of speech is confined to the upper classes. Quite the contrary: the lower classes are to a great extent equally affected by this national charac-

teristic; and it is intensely ludicrous to hear the great unwashed use the same punctilious form of address—especially so, when it is mixed up with the blasphemous and ribald language which is far too common among them. Fancy a gentleman and lady of the purlieus of Petticoat Lane meeting in the early morn, and commencing a conversation in this fashion: "Have you slept well, madam?" "Perfectly, I thank you, have you?" "Admirably." "I am delighted." And then, perhaps, the lady and gentleman, descending from the courtly sphere, exchange a few expressive observations in a tongue scarcely agreeable to ears polite; and after exhausting the subject, and their command of adjectives, hastily climb again to the higher realms of speech, and wish each other good-day in this wise: "May God go with you, madam." "May He have you in His keeping. I kiss your hand, sir." And yet I have repeatedly heard in Spain such street dialogues between the lower classes, and San Fulano is by no means behind other towns, so far as concerns its choice mixed vocabulary. Again, supposing one has to make a purchase, the shopkeeper will be found primed with compliments. On entering the tienda, the proprietor steps forward, and with much stateliness bids you welcome, and desires that happiness may attend you. He then assures you that his house, himself, and his goods are unreservedly at your service; yet still he does not forget to put the highest price on everything. Indeed, at first a stranger is captivated by the outward show of chivalrous courtesy with which all classes greet him; but should he linger in the land, he will soon discover that the flowery sentences are empty nothings—that in fact they may be defined by one word, as my American friend defined them, and that word is "bunkum."

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER 1.

IN Farmer Applegarth's lower meadow a bull was being baited; and from all the moor and fell-side huts and villages around, miners had come trooping in with dogs at their heels, to enjoy the sport. Nay, boys and women were not wanting, for those were rough times, and unless the poor beast had been duly tortured, his flesh would not have been esteemed sufficiently tender for a gentleman's table. Beef was wanting for a banquet at Derwentside

Hall, and hence there was a call for the bull-bait. Women then worked in the depths of the coal-pits, not merely on the banks, and were naturally amazons of a coarse and brutalised type, mingling freely with the men in their rough games, just as they shared their labours.

A strong stake being driven securely into the ground, a fine young bull, with sleek brown hide and fiery eyes, was fastened to it, with length of chain just sufficient to leave him free to throw himself about in impotent attempts to break away. Then, one by one, thick-set, black-muzzled, strong-fanged bull-dogs were let loose upon him; dogs trained to the sport, and expected to grip the bull firmly by the nostril and pin him to the earth.

But the proud animal, already chafed by the chain and the vociferous spectators, was not likely to brook this onslaught; and they who ventured their dogs were prepared to see them caught on the ready horns of the bull, and tossed high in air over his head, gored, maimed, and bleeding, to lie down and die, or return to the charge more furious from defeat, whilst the chained beast champed and bellowed, and bending down its strong and massive head, brought its defensive horns low enough to catch his foes one after another on their formidable points, and fling them to their defeated fellows; or, wild with pain, strove in vain to shake his tormentors from frothy lip, or bleeding flank and dewlap, till he sank exhausted, the dogs were choked off, and the butcher with his pole-axe put an end to the brutal sport.

Common as were such scenes, it is not to be supposed that the whole of the community countenanced or upheld them. They were sanctioned by custom and long usage, but humanity and intelligence shrank from such spectacles, and tender-hearted women shuddered at the very thought.

Such, though reared on the moor-side, with none of the educational advantages of the present day, was Hope Wolsingham, dairymaid on the Applegarth farm, which was situated near the confines of the Derwentside woods, sheltered and almost shadowed by the oak-crowned rocks, below which rose and fell with many curves the mile long byeway to the river and the hall. Between the woods and the farm, round which it swept, ran the broader lane common to the scattered population, and was cut up into deep ruts by the wheels of coal waggons and farmers' carts. Not far away was a side gate into the woods, and

anyone crossing thence to the moors must pass the farmyard gate.

At this moor-side farm, Hope Wolsingham had been placed by her grandmother when she was little over nine years of age. Her father and mother had both been killed by choke-damp in the bottom of the coal-pit where they worked together, and Betty Wolsingham—nurse and doctress to the whole moor-side—thought she had done well for her orphan grandchild, when Gilbert Applegarth and his wife agreed to take the little one, and find her work on the farm. She patted Hope's fair head as she left her standing by the oak settle in the big kitchen, and bade her be "gude bairn;" but she had no oppressive forebodings of how the little back would ache with stooping to pick stones and weeds all day long, week in and week out; or how lonely and monotonous it would be to stand in a field all the sunlit hours to frighten birds from the farmer's crops with clapper, voice, and wild gesticulations, till arms and throat alike were weary. Indeed, had any philanthropist, born out of due time, so much as hinted that a growing child's strength should not be overtaxed, Betty, wise in her own generation, would no doubt have asked in indignant response: "Wey, what div ye think lads and lasses wor myed fur, but te wark? Wark's gude fur th' bairn, and wark she mun, iv she myens to live."

And really, judging from appearances, work did not seem to have done the girl much harm. She had had a good and sensible mistress. Dame Applegarth had taken her into favour, not the favour of indulgence, but judicious training for her walk in life; and at nineteen, Hope had much to thank her work and her mistress for. The fresh breezes of moor and fell had fanned the roses of her cheeks and elbows into perennial bloom. Her foot was firm and free; she was straight as a willow-wand, and as supple, and balanced the laden milk-pail on her head as easily as a countess might carry her coronet.

Be sure, many a shy glance was cast towards Gilbert Applegarth's rosy-cheeked dairy-maid at fair or market, or at the parish church on a Sunday; but Hope seemed provokingly unconscious, and would-be wooers had small encouragement.

Perhaps the right one had not glanced her way. Perhaps, Amos Hedley, the new gamekeeper at Derwentside, might have found her less indifferent had he sought her out. But though the buxom maid

might be seen in the farmyard at all hours; or on her way to field or byre with stool and pail; or decorating the barkless dairy tree with cans that shone like silver; or, if it were summer time, churning in the open-air; Amos Hedley would cross the road, and stalk past the farm gate with his gun over his shoulder, and two or three dogs at his heels, whistling, in utter disregard of the clear grey eyes that followed his footsteps, until trees or the rocky banks of the descending lane swallowed up dogs, man, and the last glint of his gun-barrel.

He was a firmly-built, keen-eyed young fellow, with crisp amber curls and fresh ruddy complexion, and Hope was not the only damsel who had speculated whether the new-comer had left a sweetheart behind him elsewhere.

It so happened that Amos had been out on the moors in attendance on his master and a party of sporting friends, and on his way homewards, laden with grouse and moor-fowl, took a short cut through Applegarth's meadow during the progress of the bull-bait.

Gipsy, a favourite black-and-tan setter, ran by his side, with eyes that sparkled like crystals in his graceful head, with every motion of which his pendulous ears flapped and shone like silk; but the drooping curve of his feathery tail, and the dark earthy clots on the fringe of his limbs, told of a heavy day's work, and a readiness for the kennel.

Whether weariness or curiosity, or both combined, prompted Amos to take the field-path rather than the lane, he soon had cause to regret his choice. Your gamekeeper is never a favourite with the dregs of a rural population, more particularly if he be a faithful conservator of his master's interests, and Amos Hedley had not won his way into favour by familiarity.

His appearance on the scene was a signal for scowling and whispering. It was observed and hinted that his gun was slung at his back, and that he had only one dog with him.

Presently someone—it was afterwards said Nick Faw, the travelling tinker—suggested that it would be fine fun to see Gipsy set a bull; his cronies, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing, about whom hung a flavour of poaching, catching and communicating the "gran lairk" to others. No coal-pit ever fired more rapidly than the refuse of that crowd, already excited to explosion.

Amos had loitered to look on, Gipsy wagging his tail and putting down his

head dubiously, as cries of "Naw, Grip!" "Naw, Holdfast!" "Pincher fur ivvor!" "Naw Grip's pinned un by'r lakins!" "Dom ye, Pincher hez him!" half drowned the stifled bellowing of the bull.

There was a simultaneous movement amongst the crowd, the setter was caught up by experienced hands, and before Amos, who was hustled aside, could interpose, the dog was flung into the open ring right in the face of the maddened beast. Nature and training were against his attacking so formidable a foe, yet Gipsy was too well-bred to turn tail even had there been time. The bull, with Holdfast on his flank, Grip hanging to his lip, and Pincher on his shoulder, yet made a final spurt to shake them off, and meet the new assailant. Down went the strong sharp horn, and Gipsy flew into the air, and landed far behind with a great gash in his side, and a broken foreleg.

"Who did that?" cried Amos angrily, as he caught sight of the setter in the ring. "Gip, Gip!" but the good dog was past recall; and the gamekeeper, descriing a grinning face before him, clutched the owner by the collar, and well shook the grimy fellow, whom he accused of the cruel deed in no measured language.

Nick Faw had both hands free, and helpers ready. Tearing himself loose he struck out at Amos, who was cumbered with his load of game.

The mischievous conspirators closed round with shouts and yells; the birds were torn from him, and tossed from hand to hand; the flagging bull was forgotten now that there was an obnoxious item of humanity to bait; and though the shrill voices of women, and the gruff tones of sturdy men called loudly for fair play, and though Farmer Applegarth hurried up and strove with strength of limb and authority to part the swaying crowd, Amos was battered right and left, his one pair of muscular hands availing little against the shower of kicks and blows which fell upon him and threatened a fatal issue.

Already his manful bearing had created a diversion in his favour amongst the miners and other non-plotters. An attempt at his rescue, which might have resulted in a general fight, was being made, when there was a simultaneous cry from the skirts of the noisy crowd: "Sir William!" "Sir William!" and almost at the same moment was heard the authoritative demand: "What is the meaning of this?"

The unlooked-for appearance of the

baronet and his friends cowed the turbulent spirits, that is, as soon as the silence which fell on the fringe of the dispersing crowd communicated its warning to the writhing knot of brutes who had Amos Hedley in their midst struggling for his life, now up, now down.

Nick Faw slunk away on the first alarm, leaving his two associates, Joey and Mat, to bear the brunt of the baronet's displeasure; and when Amos rose staggering to his feet, a bleeding, bruised, and disordered libel on the fresh-looking young fellow who had come so fearlessly into their midst, hands were not wanting to secure the delinquents, or tongues to tell their demerits.

And a demerit not to be overlooked by the men who had pitted their bull-dogs against the bull, by this time despatched, was the outrageous unfairness of flinging a setter in the ring at a bull-bait; the onslaught on the keeper was as nothing in comparison.

Nor was Sir William likely to overlook either the loss of his four-footed favourite, which had unaccountably disappeared, or the maltreatment of his servant.

Cursing Nick Faw with every step of the long road, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing were hauled off with scant ceremony to the justice-room of the hall, and thence transition to the local house of correction was swifter than pleasant. It was no use for notorious poachers to plead that they were mere tools of Nick Faw, the tinker. They had been instrumental in the destruction or injury of a valuable dog, highly prized by Sir William, and had likewise brutally ill-used his servant.

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH Amos Hedley had struggled to his feet on the opportune arrival of his good master, he staggered like a drunken man, and was only kept from falling by the help of others. Being a single man, he was quartered at the hall with one of the grooms; but he had bled profusely, and was in no condition to walk thither, and no conveyance was at hand.

But Gilbert Applegarth was, and though he did not throw his doors open to every fellow who got bruised in a common brawl, he was ready enough to proffer hospitable welcome and attention to any decent body in distress.

He was especially attentive to the wounded Amos, who cut a sorry figure in his torn garments, with his cut lip, swollen

nose, and eyes half-closed with pulpy cushions of indescribable hue. In his bluff good-nature he felt as if the onslaught on the gamekeeper in some sort reflected on himself, seeing that it occurred on his own land, and that he could not do too much to wipe out the stain.

He assured Sir William that his servant should have every attention at the farm, that his presence there would be "no inconvenience whatever;" and at the young man's earnest request, caused diligent search to be made for the missing setter, which, not being found, dead or alive, was conjectured to have been carried off by the uncanny tinker.

When Amos, supported by the farmer and his son, stumbled into the great kitchen—where a bright fire was blazing on the hearth, gleaming and glimmering again in polished oak, glowing in burnished brass and pewter—and was helped to a cushioned rocking-chair by the ingle-nook, a stooping female figure rose with a sudden exclamation, to make way for them, almost upsetting a large bowl of water as she did so. It was Hope Wolsingham, whose eyes were red with weeping, and whose clothing bore as many sanguine stains as that of Amos, who was almost too blind, dazed, and exhausted to take note of her or her occupation.

A low whine of recognition, a dog's nose against the hand which hung listlessly down, aroused him to the consciousness that Gipsy was safe, and next, that the young woman before him had been compassionately washing the wounds of the poor creature, and binding them up as carefully as though it had been human.

He could not see how she had wept over the dog, when by some instinct it had crept to her feet at the house-door, or how pitifully she had brought water for its thirst as well as its injuries, or the mental process by which the dog had been associated with its keeper. But for what he did see, his heart thanked her better than his lips.

Aye, and thanked her more than when, in conjunction with busy Dame Applegarth, her attention was transferred to himself, and he felt the fingers tremble as they bathed his poor disfigured face, or fed him with healing possets, or shook up the soft feather pillows to ease his aching head and shoulders.

Sir William came to see his gamekeeper, and then my lady, whose curiosity had been aroused by her husband's praises of

the kind-hearted dairy-maid, who had so deftly bound up Gipsy's gaping side and broken limb, and was taking as much care of the setter as of the young man.

Hope curtsied and blushed, and rolled her apron over her hands abstractedly as her ladyship with condescending affability commended the maid's humanity and skill; but she jerked her hands behind her when the lady drew a long crimson silk purse from her handsome reticule to proffer a golden gift, and retreated as if the coin were a very witch's lure.

"Hout, maw ledly!" she protested. "Aw cuddn't, aw cuddn't tak' it! The puir dumb doggie's welcome twice over. Aw'd be a brute mysel' to tak' pay fur th' bit of tendin' aw gied either th' puir doggie or th' canny young chep yander, they brutes nigh clooted to death!"

The money went back into the purse of the visitor, who returned to the hall undecided whether to admire or resent the singular young woman's refusal of a reward.

Amos Hedley knew, though his eyes were half-shut; and the "puir doggie" might have known, he wagged his tail so unhesitatingly at her approach, or followed her movements with his bright black eyes, before he began to limp after her on his three sound legs.

She put aside the faint thanks of Amos, much as she had rejected payment for an act of natural kindness, but she gave the dumb animal many a caress, which the "canny young chep" envied; having no intuitive perception that the tender-hearted maiden was caressing himself by proxy.

He had spent a day in bed, with steaks from the brown bull upon his disfigured face, and had quite a week in the farmer's easy-chair, before the taxed-cart was sent for him from the hall; and though the farmer and his dame did their hospitable utmost towards his comfort and recovery, he was keenly sensible of the difference of touch and tone when their dairy-maid applied a poultice, or administered herbal decoctions prepared from her grandmother's recipes. And though his eyes were black and swollen, he had yet sight enough to discern the fair proportions of Hope's lissom form, the tenderness of her smiling countenance, until, as the outer wounds healed, a new and inner one opened.

Hope offered her shoulder for him to lean on as he walked to the cart, and he was not too proud to accept her aid, although he knew well he could have done without

it. She ran to the barn for straw to put under his feet, and to make a bed for Gipsy. She stroked and patted the dog, which returned her farewell in demonstrative dog-fashion. She shook hands with Amos heartily, bidding him come and show himself when he was quite well, and to keep out of the ill-disposed tinker's way. And when the cart had driven off, and Gilbert Applegarth and his wife had gone back into the house, she still lingered at the gate to watch the conveyance as it turned the corner of a moss-grown grey rock, and waved her last good-bye to the young man, who chanced to look back at that moment.

Barely had Amos Hedley time to discover that he was in love with pretty, rosy-cheeked Hope Wolsingham, and to torment himself lest his disfigured face should have set her against him, or to resolve that he would not set foot again on Applegarth's floor until his lip was completely healed, and he could walk erect as of old, self-conscious of strength and comeliness; barely, I say, had he time to arrive at this stage of feeling and resolve, when news reached the hall that his two poaching assailants had escaped.

There had been iron bars to the windows of their prison, and the building was of solid stone, but the rogues and vagabonds were lodged in one common room, and it had a window easily accessible from without.

Two of the three iron stanchions, which had seen years of service, had been filed away, evidently by a practised hand. The lead-setting of the diamond-panes had been cut clean through, and the entire window with not a pane broken left outside, along with a rope which dangled from the remaining bar.

It was very plain that Nick Faw had come to the rescue of his comrades, and had satisfied them that there was honour among thieves.

Sir William and his fellow justices were naturally incensed, threatened the warder with dismissal, and had descriptions of Joey Dobson and Matthew Laing inserted in the *Huc-and-Cry*, but they might have spared their pains; the men were not forthcoming.

A pedlar brought the news with his pack to the servants' hall at Derwentside, and what more natural than for Amos Hedley to hasten with the intelligence to his kind friends at the farm, forgetful of his seamed lips and yet perceptible limp. Bearing a hare over his shoulder as a present from

Sir William to the farmer, a pair of bright shoe-buckles and a gay cap-ribbon from the pedlar's pack for the mistress and her maid, he crossed the park in an unwonted tremor, and had nearly stepped upon a steel man-trap, of his own setting, in his incautious hurry through the woods.

As he emerged from the shadow of the trees at the copse-gate, he saw that the pedlar must have loitered by the way and left his news behind him, for all down the village street knots of women with their bare arms crossed, and smutty fellows with short pipes between their teeth, were grouped together, or dispersing to gossip elsewhere. The farm-gate stood open; burly Gilbert Applegarth, with both hands thrust into his breeches'-pocket, leaned against the gate-post, demonstrating to an eager audience that none other than Nick Faw the tinker had helped the culprits out of gaol. Wasn't he and them thick as thieves? And wasn't there a token of his handywork about it?

Applegarth's tall son George, with a flail over his shoulder, stood close by his father's side, nodding his head in assent, and Amos caught a glimpse of a dark blue printed short-gown, or jacket, and a smiling face under a white linen cap between the father and son; but as he neared the group, he saw a dark petticoat disappear round the corner of the house, and his heart sank with a great fall.

He was too busy asking himself the question why Hope ran away, to pay much attention to the queries of others concerning the prison-breakers, and the farmer spoke to him twice before he received an assent to his theory of Nick Faw's tools having done the business.

Disheartened by Hope's apparent avoidance, he would have contented himself with handing the hare to the farmer with Sir William's compliments, and leaving the buckles for Dame Applegarth with his own "respectful service," but Gipsy did not answer to his call, his lip was yet too sore for whistling, and Gilbert's hospitality was not to be gainsaid; so, partly to oblige the farmer, and partly to look after the stray setter, he followed the former into the big kitchen, where Mrs. Applegarth was drawing a smoking hot loaf from the oven. And then the gossips must have dispersed, for Georgie Applegarth's flail was heard at work in the barn.

The eyes of Amos were again disappointed. A sun-burned hat on a peg, and

a pair of pattens by the door, were all the visible signs of Hope.

The dame could not leave her baking, and the farmer wanted cheese and ale. He strode to the door and called "Hope, hinny!" in a voice like a trumpet.

At the call Hope came in from the dairy with Gipsy in her wake, licking from his black muzzle the traces of fresh curds. The roses on Hope's cheeks were in their fullest bloom, but her eyes avoided Amos, and after a salutation, too brief and commonplace to satisfy his new craving, she coolly lifted a brown stoneware jug from a hook, and descended into the cellar for the ale. Then she placed the cheese-beggin, containing nearly half a cheese, beside the ale, and a fresh brown loaf by the side of that, with no more apparent concern than a daily duty called for.

Amos felt himself rebuffed. He had not the perception to realise that Gipsy stood proxy for himself when Hope stooped to pat him, or stroke his silken ears, as she went to and fro; or that she had disappeared on his approach, lest her pleasure should be too self-evident.

She had had time, since she saw him cross the lane, to decide that he was well enough to have put in an appearance earlier if he were as grateful as he had professed, and to collect her womanly resolution not to make herself too cheap. So Gipsy came in for the favours self-consciousness withheld from his master.

She was sufficiently well-pleased, when Amos, with more parade than was at all necessary, produced the shining shoe-buckles, and begged Mrs. Applegarth to accept them; and she was ready with her admiration; but something she would have scorned to call a pain smote her when he rose to depart without offering her "so mickle as a brass thimble," as she said to herself.

Had she followed Amos to the gate, no doubt the bright-hued ribbon would have been forthcoming, but she gave him her hand to shake as he lingered by the door, and said "gude-bye" with much less heartiness than did her tall thin mistress, going back to her butter-making before his foot was well off the threshold.

I've a notion that had he looked into the dairy and seen her wipe her arm roughly across her eyes as if half-ashamed that the process was necessary, he would not only have left the ribbon, but something else besides for a remembrance.

Gipsy seemed to have an inkling that all

was not right, and came rubbing his head against her woollen petticoat, but a sharp call, repeated still more sharply, drew the dog after his disconcerted and discontented master, as fast as his three legs would carry him; and soon the russet woods swallowed up both, and it was no use straining wet eyes at the dairy lattice.

A BUNDLE OF OLD PLAYBILLS.

A BUDGET of playbills relating to by-gone years, like broadsheets, placards, and handbills, may be made sources of instruction if judiciously used. There are materials in them for obtaining a peep into the state of society at the time. They tell us what was the prevalent bent of public taste in regard to the legitimate drama, as contrasted with lighter and slighter dramatic compositions, extravagant burlesques, merry farces, and spectacular entertainments. They give us the names of pieces now utterly forgotten, and of a few which have greatly increased in public favour since. They mention the names of actors and actresses, then struggling into favour, who afterwards became prime favourites receiving large salaries. They give note of the prices of admission to theatres, and of the hours for opening the doors and commencing the performance. They show, especially in the country theatres, how hard was the struggle of the poor folks to earn a crust. They make us acquainted with the fact that the performers were then compelled to keep a large number of parts in memory. The playbill was changed nearly every night in those times; and there was no such thing as two hundred, five hundred, eight hundred, twelve hundred consecutive representations of the same piece. They show how often the manager treated the public as big children, requiring to be told in the playbill about the plot and merit of the piece to be acted. They show, among other curious things, that the performers sometimes told their troubles to the audience through the medium of the playbills, instead of adopting the modern form of appealing through the newspapers—a difference quite intelligible when we consider the paucity of journals in former times.

There is extant a collection of playbills issued by the Theatre Royal, Manchester, about ninety years ago, just before the horrors of the great French Revolution

were beginning, when naval victories were often won over France and Spain, and when King George (Farmer George) was the popular sovereign of England. The Manchester theatre was not quite the best in the provinces, but still it had a good reputation, and brought into notice many who afterwards proved to be sterling members of the theatrical profession.

Some of these bills of the play are curiously descriptive of the pieces about to be performed, as if imparting knowledge to the really ignorant, or intended to rouse curiosity and anticipatory sympathy.

One night, when *The Gamester* was performed, the author of the playbill or programme—as we now more genteelly call it—informed the about-to-be-enthralled audience that “This celebrated Tragedy is an honest attack upon one of the most pernicious vices that Mankind in general, and this nation in particular, is unhappily subject. To show how Property is transferred from the undesigning Votary of Chance to the vile Betrayer of Confidence and the insidious dark-minded Sharper, was an Undertaking worthy of the Pen of the ingenious Author. This Play, before its Representation, was shown in the Manuscript to the celebrated Dr. Young, who highly approved it, with the remark that ‘Gaming had long wanted such a Caustic as the concluding scene of this Tragedy presented.’”

When O’Keefe’s farce of *The Agreeable Surprise* reached Manchester, it was ushered in with the following playbill announcement: “The Success of this piece was immense at the Haymarket Theatre; indeed, so extraordinary as to induce Mr. Harris to desire, as a Favour, Mr. Colman’s permission to act it three nights in the week at Covent Garden Theatre. The applause was so unbounded as to occasion a repeated Request for two Nights More, which was granted, and for which Public Thanks were given in the Papers.” The tragedy of *Jane Shore*, over which our grandmothers and great-grandmothers wept abundantly, was thus recommended to the notice of the public by the manager, or his literary assistant who drew up the playbill: “There is not, perhaps, in the English Language a Piece better Calculated to rouse the feelings of the Heart, or inculcate Strict Morality, than this. The Downfall of Lord Hastings, the Tyranny of the Duke of Gloucester, and the severe Trial of Jane Shore (who dies in the public

Streets for Want), never fail to work the intended effect upon the Passions, shocking them with Wonder, rousing them to Indignation, and softening them into Pity—the Heart being ever readier to sympathise with Historical Facts than it ever can be with Poetic Fiction.”

Sometimes a description of the scenery was given, instead of a disquisition on the moral excellences of the play. On an evening when Shakespeare’s *Tempest* was to be performed, the playbill told the audience that “This Piece opens with a view of a Tempestuous Sea and a Ship in Distress, accompanied with Lightning, Thunder, and Showers of Fire, which entirely consume the Vessel. In Act the Fifth a View of a Calm Sea, in which Neptune and Amphitrite will be discovered in their Chariot drawn by Sea Horses. The whole to conclude with Ariel’s Ascending in a Golden Chariot drawn by Eagles.” No doubt the manager took great pride in the scenic display thus magniloquently described; and we are quite disposed to award honourable mention to the thunder and lightning, the ship and the devouring fire, Neptune and Amphitrite, their chariot and sea-horses, and Ariel’s golden chariot drawn by eagles. It was no fault in the Manchester staff to be unable to foresee what Mr. Macready and Mr. Beverley would achieve in these matters sixty years later. One evening, when King Richard the First, *Cœur de Lion*, was performed, the printed description told that “The First Act opens with a View of a Strong Castle in a wild and mountainous Country. Act the Second begins with an exact Representation of the Works of an old Fortified Fosse, Terrain, Parapet, &c. In Act the Third a Grand Battle on a Drawbridge before the Castle where Richard is a Prisoner, which is Storm’d by Matilda’s Troops, led by the Gallant Blondel, who sets the King at Liberty. The Whole to conclude with a March and Chorus, Long Live the King.”

This “Long Live the King” affords an opportunity of remarking that the Manchester manager availed himself of all suitable occasions for touching incidentally on topics of current popular interest; and the playbills thus serve as a reminder of bits of history and biography illustrative of those days. Shakespeare was not appreciated then exactly as he is now; but there was at any rate a humble attempt to compliment him. For the benefit of

Mr. Brown—one of the undying Browns—after the performance of Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of Chances, came "A celebrated Monody, written by Mr. Pratt, called the Shadow of Shakespeare, or Shakespeare's Characters doing homage to Garrick." Here the motive at once presents itself, for the great actor had recently

Shuff'd off the mortal coil.

On another evening, as a playbill informs us, "Mrs. Farren will recite the Monody Written by R. B. Sheridan, Esq., on the Death of David Garrick." The loyalty of the nation to George the Third was conspicuously shown in those days; and the theatres were regarded as suitable places wherein to manifest it as opportunity offered. On one particular evening, after the performance of Jane Shore, and before that of *The Citizen*, the playbill announced that "By Desire of several Ladies and Gentlemen, the Song of God Save Great George our King, Long live our Noble King, will be sung in full Chorus by every Gentleman in the Company." This was at a time when naval victories over the French and Spaniards were numerous and brilliant. More suited to dramatic or really theatrical display, however, were incidents illustrative or imitative—of course in a very humble way—of the operations of war itself. Such, for instance, as "A Picturesque Allegorical Representation of the Invincibility of the Rock of Gibraltar, in a most Elegant Moving Transparent Painting of the Garrison during the Siege; another of the Destruction of the Gunboats, and Floating Batteries on Fire; with an elegant Representative Transparency of the Temple of Fame. Dedicated to the gallant General Elliot." A renowned admiral's achievements were celebrated at the Manchester theatre on another occasion by a recitation; when, among a variety of entertainments, was given "The celebrated Old Ballad called the Battle of La Hogue, gained by Lord Rodney over De Grasse; written immediately after the Action, and received with great Applause by the British Officers at the Theatre in Jamaica; to be sung by Mr. Wordsworth, in a new Transparent Scene, representing the British and French Fleets in the Action, with the Cæsar on fire, and the Capture of the Ville de Paris." There is a little chronological confusion here; but we interpret the meaning to be that the battle celebrated was that fought and won by Admiral Lord Rodney, while

the song itself was sung to the tune of an old ballad relating to the battle of La Hogue.

One feature strikingly observable in theatrical matters at that time was the variety of entertainments often presented on one evening, as if to catch shillings from divers pockets by appealing to as many tastes as could well be managed at once. A frequent announcement to be met with in our bundle of playbills is: "At the end of the Play, a Comic Song by Mr. Munden"—Munden, who afterwards became the best of all English performers of old men in comedy. On one evening, between the third and fourth acts of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, was introduced, "A New Song, called the Medley of Lovers, by Mr. Munden." On another evening, after a performance of *Hamlet*, "The Audience will be entertained with the Performance of the Surprising Ventriloquist, Little Tommy the Speaking Figure. This amusing little man is nothing similar to the original Speaking Figure, but is exhibited in a manner quite different; for it asks Questions, gives Answers, and sings Songs, besides an imitation of Clarinets and Flageolets, Demonstrably without any Confederacy." It is not difficult to see that Little Tommy was an example of a very humble but ingenious kind of speaking figure, often still to be seen in the smaller places of amusement, the exhibitor supplying all the voice and song from his own lungs. The really wonderful automata constructed by Vaucanson and Maelzel, and the automatically-speaking figures of that and later times, belonged to a different class altogether.

There appears, from some of the playbills, to have been a family named Hannett, who assisted in imparting miscellaneous variety to the entertainments at the Manchester theatre. Several members of the family aided to produce "A Combined Entertainment;" Mr., Mrs., Miss, Miss M., and Miss C. Hannett played in the dramatic romance of *Cymon*; then one of them in the dramatic sketch called *The Oracle*; and lastly, two of them in the scene of the *Fine Lady* from Garrick's farce of *Lethe*. We know something of this kind at the present day, where several members of one family, clever and well-drilled, join in an entertainment purposely adapted to exhibit their powers. One Mr. Ryley, a member of the Manchester Company, was apparently very versatile in his theatrical delineations; for one evening, between the

first and second pieces, he sang or recited (perhaps a combination of both) a queer bow-wow composition, giving imitations or delineations of "An Old Dog, a Wretched Dog, a Swaggering Dog, a Strong Dog, a Happy Dog, a Comic Dog, a Greedy Dog, a Cheating Dog; the whole in the character of a Faithful Dog."

Incidentally we find mention of benefit nights, as means for augmenting salaries. This is a subject which the public generally know little about. It is quite evident that benefits often form an important element in the terms of engagement between the manager and the members of the company. Many of the humbler folk have a sort of partnership interest in the receipts on certain evenings, in the form of a percentage on the proceeds of all tickets sold by them. On one occasion we are told that "Tickets will be taken this night for the benefit of Mr. Franks, hairdresser; Mr. Nightingale, gallery doorkeeper; Mr. Bamford, box checktaker; Mr. Tiffing, box lobby-keeper; Mr. Ridings and Mr. Beswick, musicians." On another evening the public were entreated so to arrange that the advantages should go to those for whom they were intended, and not to outside schemers and tricksters: "Tickets will be taken this night for the Benefit of Mr. Barker, boxkeeper; Mr. Ludlow, pit office-keeper; Mr. Peile, musician; Kitty Harvey, fruitwoman [this reminds us of Nell Gwynne in the time of the Merry Monarch]; and Mr. Horrocks, stage-doorkeeper. As several people have been imposed upon [here's the rub] by buying tickets on these Nights in the Avenue and about the doors of the Theatre, which were forged; this is to give notice that proper people will take Notice of the sellers of Tickets, and all those purchased that way will not be admitted."

Sometimes the humbler members of the company, in the playbills, entreated the public in almost passionate terms to patronise them liberally on their benefit nights, as in the following instance: "Mr. and Mrs. Duncan with the greatest respect acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen that the Failure of their Benefit at the Theatre is the sole reason for their Soliciting Favour and Support." What the cause of failure was, we are not informed. "Being advised by Many Friends to give the following entertainment, it is humbly hoped that (with Mr. Munden's assistance, who has kindly offered it gratis) they will be found deserving. They would be

happy to have had it in their Power to Exhibit at the Theatre; but the very great expense that would attend 'tis presumed will sufficiently apologise." Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, we may surmise, hired a hall or minor place of amusement.

Mr. Williams, another member of the company, had a mishap which rendered him sadly in need of aid, either through a benefit night or some other channel; for one playbill announces Inkle and Yarico and The Liar for a particular evening, but a MS. note informs us that "there was no play on this night; because Mr. Williams, who was to have played Inkle, broke his leg." Some weeks afterwards his benefit was announced. The playbill expressed the confidence of the poor fellow "that the late Unfortunate Accident, which debarred him of an opportunity of appearing on the Stage for Five Weeks (and even when it did permit him, deprived him of the Power of performing with the Propriety he would wish), does in some Measure Exclude him from a Title to their Favour; yet he hopes his having so Severely Suffered by the Unhappy Misfortune will in some degree plead his Excuse in requesting at this Time a Small Share of that Candour and Liberality which have ever been the Peculiar Characteristics of the Polite Audience of Manchester." Poor broken-legged Inkle! if initial capitals could bring a large audience, his yearning playbill would have done it.

Another benefit night reveals some of the financial perplexities of the struggling actors. Mr. Grist, advertising in a playbill that he would impersonate Cardinal Wolsey in Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth for his benefit, gives us a peep behind the (commercial) scenes. He solicits the patronage of the public because his engagement at the Manchester theatre was rather of a peculiar character. By agreement he was "to perform Twelve Nights, without salary or any other kind of emolument but what may arise from the Receipts on his Benefit Night, after deducting the Manager's charge of Thirty Guineas, together with additional printing, &c. These are the conditions of his engagement; and, under such circumstances, Mr. Grist solicits the patronage of the public." Poor grist, it may be feared, came to Mr. Grist's mill in return for his twelve nights' performances.

One Mr. Penn, who had somehow or other become incarcerated within four strong walls, announced his benefit at

the theatre in superbly lofty language: "Mr. Penn should think himself extremely unworthy of the favour he has hitherto received were he to omit the present opportunity of acknowledging to the Manager and Company of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, whose weekly contributions since his arrival at Lancaster Castle have so materially tended to soften the rigours of his confinement; and as the future happiness or misery of his life depends on the Profits of this night, he most humbly but earnestly solicits the patronage of a public, ever remarkable for their spirited endeavours to succour the distressed, to countenance the only chance now left him to procure (that Blessing so dear to every species of Humanity)—his LIBERTY!" This last outburst is melodrama of the first water. Perhaps Mr. Penn could not meet the monetary demands made upon him by a creditor; and we know from other sources that imprisonment for debt was no light matter towards the close of the last century.

The rivalries and jealousies among the aspirants for theatrical fame were as prevalent then as they are now; and the playbills were often used as the medium for expressing or exposing them. Mr. Ryley, whose name has been mentioned in a former paragraph, one day complained in a playbill of the treatment to which Mrs. Ryley had been subjected in a matter of stage precedence or rank: "The part of William in *Rosina* has belonged to Mrs. Ryley from the time she first played at the Theatre, before a second singer had been engaged. Mr. Banks, to make the piece as respectable as possible, desired that she would, for that night, play *Phoebe*; and that when it was repeated she should resume her own character. Mr. Richards, after asking Mrs. Ryley to play William for his Benefit, which she gladly assented to, has advertised her in the bills for *Phoebe*: denying at the same time his ever speaking to her about William, which Mr. Banks can attest is a gross falsehood." There ensued revenge and counter revenge; Mrs. Ryley refused to play *Phoebe* for Mr. Richards, and then Miss Richards refused to play in a new musical farce written by Mr. Ryley, and produced at his benefit.

We have the authority of Sam Slick for saying that "There's a good deal that's nat'ral in human natur;" and old playbills tell us, on not less reliable testimony, that the nat'ral tendencies of human natur

are as perceptible behind the scenes of a theatre, as in the presence of a crowd of spectators and admiring listeners in the auditorium.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLES," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVII. "TOM ESDAILE'S BOY."

It was a relief to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile to know from Dunstan himself that he was going to marry Janet. There was nothing heroic about the young man, but there was a certain generosity and large-heartedness which made him able to be glad that the girl who had rejected him was not to have her life also embittered by disappointment. And at first he had feared that it was to be so. With the revelation of the truth to him, there had come much more than the bitterness of the knowledge that it was his own familiar friend who had won, all unconsciously, that which to Sir Wilfrid seemed just the one prize in the gift of fate worth the winning: there had come great compassion and fear for Janet herself. It had not occurred to him for a moment that Janet had made such an impression upon Dunstan, as could lead to the result that had taken place. He and his friend had dropped the subject of Mrs. Thornton by tacit consent, and Esdaile did not know whether Dunstan had got over it; but whether or no, there had not been anything to indicate that one so different had supplanted Laura. Esdaile did not think Dunstan more likely to be constant to a hopeless passion than any other man—always excepting himself, whom a little while ago he would have suspected of such a sentiment less than anybody—but his very winning and quietly attentive ways, which might have looked to a stranger like the result of captivity, were, as Esdaile knew, habitual to Dunstan, and just as much addressed to Miss Sandilands, or to Julia Carmichael, as to Janet. Her rejection of himself was, he well knew, final; he had said to himself, "She will never change"—was not that steadfastness of hers in all things, great and small, one of her rare charms?—and in all his own pain he had grieved for hers, quite sincerely and unaffectedly, and with much impatient murmuring at the pre-

valence of cross-purposes in human affairs, and the vanity of all things. Here was Janet, a peerless woman, throwing away love—which would have made him (Esdaile) the happiest man alive, and kept him straight, as he familiarly phrased it in his thoughts, always—upon Dunstan, who was in love with another woman, who had thrown him over very lightly to say the least of it. Esdaile did not hate his friend because Janet loved him, though he frankly envied him with all his heart; and when the news reached him, he was surprised beyond measure. The cure had then been complete, and strangely rapid; going on under his own eyes, and he had never suspected it! Well; so be it! Dunstan was a good fellow, but he did not deserve this last best good that fate had sent him; the man who had been so enslaved by one so very different from Janet, could not give Janet such love as she merited, such love as only could make her happy. Esdaile believed himself to be a commonplace enough sort of a fellow; until he met Janet he had never particularly wished to be other and better than he was; but he believed that he could appreciate her more highly, and sympathise with her more truly—he who had never been in love with anyone except her, who had no memories of false and fickle fine ladyism to blunt his perception of her pure truth and fervent goodness, and take the edge off his taste for those qualities. Dunstan was going to marry Janet, and he could write of it so coolly, and hope all follies—meaning love of the kind which he had lavished vainly on Laura Chumleigh—were over for him! It seemed like a bad dream to Esdaile, but also a very hard and bitter reality; and nothing that he had ever had to do in his life cost him so much pain in the doing as the writing to Dunstan, whose letter had reached him before he left England, and travelled with him to the town on the Spanish frontier, from whence he had despatched his answer.

Would Sir Wilfrid have been sufficiently magnanimous to be glad, had he known that it was to his hand Janet owed the little push that had set the wheel of fortune turning for her? When he found among his papers the black-bordered envelope, addressed, in a hand which he had never seen, to Captain Edward Dunstan, and sent it on to its destination, he had been glad that he was accidentally able to remove a cause of annoyance and per-

plexity from his friend and from Janet; but he had thought no more of it, and he never knew that to that trifling circumstance the woman he loved owed the fulfilment of her heart's desire.

There had fallen on Sir Wilfrid a great weariness of life, and the evils of his early training, or rather the want of it, began to tell on him. If he had not hitherto regarded life from an Utopian point of view, he had at least believed it a very pleasant sort of experience and institution generally, and had not troubled himself with the contemplation of it in any of its aspects towards persons less fortunate than himself. He was very good-natured, easy to move to a ready and untroublesome kind of charitableness, and, as he proved in the case of John Sandilands, trusty in friendship; but he was not either by nature or education a man to bear trouble, and especially disappointment, well, in the sense of profitably. Out of the eater comes not forth meat, nor of the bitter, sweetness, except to the tried and disciplined mind and will, and these he had not; so that Sir Wilfrid Esdaile took it ill that his sky was clouded over, and sulked with fortune, in whose smiles he had lived hitherto, because her brow had knitted itself, and her eyes were stern. The first time a man learns, as a hard fact, by personal experience, that he cannot have what he wants, the lesson is bound to be unpleasant, and it will be the more so in proportion as it is long delayed, and in striking contrast with previous experiences. Sir Wilfrid was a bad subject for such teaching; an unruly pupil in the hard school of contradiction, impatient of pain and resentful. Janet's kindly message vexed him; he had believed her wider-minded, capable of comprehension of feelings which she had never experienced, and of sympathy with them; he thought she would have some idea of what the hopeless loss of her meant to him. He believed himself much less egotistical in his love than she was in hers; the harmless words in Dunstan's letter, which she could hardly have avoided allowing him to write, unless she had made the avowal to him which it was for Esdaile himself to make or to have unmade, hurt him. She was happy, and what did it matter to her! Thus the man who really loved Janet with a love which might have elevated his whole character, misjudged her, and taking his punishment ill, hardened himself. It was not that the

"Amen" to "God bless her" stuck in his throat; no, he could be glad that she was happier than he; it was that he could not be reconciled with his enemy—disappointment. Restlessness, which is our modern fashion of parrying trouble, seized upon him, and that notion of returning to Ceylon, which he had at first mentioned to Dunstan merely because he found it difficult to write at all, and did not quite know how to account for himself, began to assume the form of a serious purpose.

He would go to Ceylon, stay awhile with John, and go on to India, do a regular grand tour of the country, and perhaps make his way to some of those wild and extraordinary places, in which everything is so utterly strange, that it seems impossible one could there go on thinking the old thoughts and be haunted by the old scenes. He had fallen in with a few people whom he knew on his way through the south of France, and had gone on with them into Spain, caring nothing about them, and little about whither he went or what he looked at, but yielding to the restlessness of an idle man. He sometimes wished now that he were not an idle man, that his life were not all leisure, that it had some certain and enforced occupation in it, since pleasure, in which he had hitherto found his business, had become of a sudden so hideously rapid, that he asked himself whether it was not the most stupendous of bores. He thought even that he should like well enough to manage that coffee-plantation of his, if only it were not his own. Altogether, the state of mind into which Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was falling was one which would have been observed with regret by anyone who cared for him. Under the influence of unhappiness, and revolt against it, the "wildness" for which Sir Wilfrid's father had had in his time a reputation, perhaps a little worse than he deserved, began to develope itself in "Tom Esdaile's boy," as Mr Gilchrist had called him. Sir Wilfrid drifted about a good deal just at this time, and when the intelligence of Dunstan's marriage reached him—he had been expecting it, half-fearing the announcement, half-longing to know that the event had really taken place, but entirely angry with himself for caring—he drifted back from Spain with the new acquaintances who had added themselves to the old ones in whose company he had crossed the frontier, and found himself, without much premeditation, and in a devil-may-care frame of

mind, among the gambling world of Nice and Monaco.

In former days Sir Wilfrid Esdaile had never cared for gambling; he had never felt the craving for any fierce and engrossing excitement, but had been well content with the less harmful diversions of sport and society. He had none of the vulgar love of mere gain that very often underlies that passion for gambling, which is, by some odd perversion of reasoning, held less odious when it is free from a sentiment which, though mean, is at least reasonable, and he was not a sufficiently rich man to lose with impunity and indifference; therefore he had kept clear of that temptation. "Fatal Zero" had not allured him, while he was still as when we saw him first; but he was drawn towards it, when in the fever of his disappointment he turned from the milder pursuits that had satisfied him hitherto.

He would go out to Ceylon by-and-by, he kept telling himself, when Ratray and St. John and Le Mesurier and the others should have gone back to London; but for the present he would stay here, and do as the others did. And so the early spring found Sir Wilfrid Esdaile among the motley company who thronged by times the Promenade des Anglais or the beautiful gardens that border the coast at Nice; but were frequent in their visits to the paradisaical pandemonium of Monaco.

He had not heard directly from Dunstan, but he knew from Julia that the newly-married pair were in Paris, and that they were to be in London after Easter. Julia said little of Janet, and that little in a measured way, and Sir Wilfrid wondered whether she had found out his secret, if secret his love could indeed have been called. He had not been careful to hide it; Dunstan, for instance, had he been observant in a very ordinary degree, might have seen it clearly enough. At least, Julia did not rejoice in Janet's marriage, that was plain. Sir Wilfrid wondered what she had said to John Sandilands about it, and what that steady-going and obstinate young Scotchman thought of the celerity with which Dunstan had recovered from his disconsolate state. How well he remembered the vague trifling way in which they had discussed the unnamed young lady of Dunstan's love, and the first casual mention of Miss Monroe!

A very bright day at the end of March had tempted out into the pure and sparkling air a number of the more confirmed invalids, whose presence lends a touch of

sadness to the scene in so many places on the Riviera. The Castle Hill was more than usually attractive, with its palms and cypresses flung against a sky of the clearest blue, and the far-spreading prospect over the Bay of the Angels steeped in sunshine. Sir Wilfrid Esdaile and two of his friends had accompanied some new arrivals to the Castle Hill, and Sir Wilfrid was pointing out to the ladies of the party the various features of a view which has not many rivals, when he suddenly stopped short, arrested by the sight of two persons who were advancing slowly in the direction of the platform.

They were two women; the taller and younger of the two leaned on the arm of the shorter and older, and though walking with manifest fatigue, had something of eagerness in her gait and expression. The sunshine seemed to bring refreshment to her eyes, and the pure delicious air to her fair but wan brow and cheeks; her slightly parted lips seemed to drink it as she came slowly on, with a graceful walk and distinguished carriage, although no one could look at her and fail to see that the beckoning hand was raised for her. Her face was very fair, with such harmony of line and feature that its beauty was still striking, though all the bloom had vanished from it; with deep dark grey eyes, and very rich fair hair, which lay in waved masses above her broad smooth brow, defined by the narrow rim of white under her close black bonnet. Her dress was the deep mourning of a widow, but of the French style, except for the narrow cap-rim. The older lady was a bright cheery-looking person of perhaps five-and-thirty, rather stout, with very black eyes, a high colour, and an expression of vigilant kindness which rendered a plain face singularly attractive. Her mere manner of supporting the delicate hand and wrist that rested on her substantial arm seemed to tell of intelligent care and tenderness. Her attire was of a thoroughly English type, and rather overdone in point of colour. It was singular that the sight of these unobtrusive persons, who took no notice at all of them, seemed to affect Sir Wilfrid Esdaile and the lady to whom he was speaking simultaneously, and with equal force, for they both started and stared. Sir Wilfrid, however, recovered himself in an instant with a muttered, "No; it cannot be!" but the lady said:

"Surely, surely, that is Janet Monroe;" and unconscious of the astonishment which her words awakened in Sir Wilfrid, walked rapidly away from him, and approached

the tall young lady in deep mourning with outstretched hand and the words: "Dear Mrs. Monroe, I am equally surprised and delighted to meet you here!"

A bright flush, which instantly faded, passed over Mrs. Monroe's face, strengthening the likeness that had struck Sir Wilfrid almost with bewilderment; and a very sweet smile, nearly as evanescent, marked her recognition of the person who addressed her.

"And I little expected to see you, Mrs. Thornton."

The stout lady had fallen back a step, as Mrs. Monroe removed the hand which had lain on her arm that it might clasp that of Laura, and was looking with pleasure and interest at the brilliant face and the beautiful dress of the dazzling little person—she looked little beside the tall bending figure of Mrs. Monroe—who glanced at her too with lively curiosity.

"My friend, Miss Wells," said Mrs. Monroe; and then Laura shook hands with Miss Wells, and called to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile to come and be introduced to Mrs. Monroe. The other gentlemen of Mrs. Thornton's party, who had moved on to another point of view before she saw Mrs. Monroe, returned, and Mr. Thornton was but little less glad than his wife to see the young widow in whom they had felt so strong an interest, the friend and neighbour of the old lady at the Stone House, far away in Scotland. But Mr. Thornton was quick to see the change in the fair face and the slight figure, and he enquired about Mrs. Monroe's health with real solicitude. Soon all the party were walking down the slope to their respective carriages, and Laura was trying hard to persuade Mrs. Monroe that nothing would be so good for her as a cruise in their yacht. The *Firefly*, it appeared, was in the harbour; and her owners had come to Nice only the day before. Laura had met several persons of her acquaintance already, but meeting Mrs. Monroe was quite too delightful. She had so much to say and to hear. Where was Mrs. Monroe staying? their hotel was on the Promenade; how delightful it would be if it proved to be Mrs. Monroe's hotel also. But this crowning satisfaction was not reserved for Laura. Mrs. Monroe was living in the old town, "to be with Miss Wells," she said briefly in explanation; and she was afraid it would be too much for her to visit Mrs. Thornton that day; the expedition to the Castle Hill had been a great undertaking for her. It

was arranged that Laura should call upon her early on the following day, and the party separated. Only a few sentences had been exchanged between Mrs. Monroe and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, but she had told him that she had heard much of him from her sister-in-law, Mrs. Dunstan; and as Janet's new name was pronounced for the first time in his hearing, Sir Wilfrid glanced at Mrs. Thornton, thinking it must sound strangely to her too; but she did not seem to have heard it.

"You remember," wrote Mrs. Thornton to her cousin, a week afterwards, "the young widow whom I met in Scotland just after my marriage, Mrs. Monroe; she is here, and I fear she is in very bad health indeed. I was near making such a blunder that I must tell you about it. We met Mrs. Monroe at the show place here, called the Castle Hill, and there was an odd, brisk, stout, kind-looking person with her, whom I took for a sort of superior maid, with a talent for the care of invalids, but Mrs. Monroe introduced her as her friend, Miss Wells. It turns out that Miss Wells is a 'character.' She has a good fortune, and spends it among the poor English at all sorts of foreign places; she stays a great deal at Nice, where she lives in the unfashionable quarter, in a roomy old hotel, because her mother and sister—the only people she had belonging to her—died here, and are buried in that dreadfully pretty and melancholy cemetery. If there are any solitary and uncared-for people among the poor creatures who come here in such numbers for a little prolongation of life, Miss Wells finds them out, and looks after them and cheers them up; and she is doing all these good things for Mrs. Monroe, who is hopelessly ill. Mr. Thornton thinks, but I think she may get better in this delightful place. And we have also met your hero, Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, and renewed our acquaintance with him. He is very nice, and I wish he were not so fond of play, and so ready to make friends of people he does not know much about. He is not in a good set, from what Mr. Thornton has already observed, if, indeed, there is a good set here—among the playing people I mean. One does see such dreadful-looking men, like the creatures with whom Becky Sharpe went to the ball where the Marquis of Steyne met her, and women more dreadful still, if

possible. Sir Wilfrid gets on better with Mr. Thornton than with me; indeed, they are great friends. I should not have taken him for the sort of person you described—I mean merely in his ways; he seems restless and easily bored, and not at all decided about what he is going to do. Mr. Thornton and he have been talking this morning about 'climbing' in the autumn, and Sir Wilfrid seems quite bitten with the idea, though he is not an Alpine man; I wish they could set about it now, for it would be much better for him than the 'tapis vert,' and the people who surround it, and he has been so good to you I cannot but like him. We had a talk about you and your plans yesterday, and he vows he will bring John Sandilands back from Ceylon, and there must be no more delay. He spoke with so much dislike of long engagements, and the slips between cup and lip in human affairs, that I have a notion of my own about him. Mrs. Monroe, whom I see every day, is full of her sister-in-law's marriage, and I have caught Sir Wilfrid looking at me once or twice when she has been asking him questions (which he answers in the vaguest way), very much as if Captain Dunstan had not kept his own counsel. If I am right, that would account, considering that he and Sir Wilfrid are such friends, for his not being very cordially disposed towards me; and yet what nonsense, now that he has got over it, and is married, like myself. It was a little odd, don't you think, that marriage? For, after all, she was nobody, and he could hardly have been very violently in love. Men are never very good at descriptions of people, and Sir Wilfrid is no better than the rest; he is very vague about Mrs. Dunstan, but says she is wonderfully like Mrs. Monroe. Our plans are not quite settled; but I think we shall be here for another fortnight, and then go to Paris, and on to London after a little time there. The house at Prince's Gate is nearly ready; we get glowing accounts of it, but of course I shall put the finishing touches to it myself. And remember, dearest Julia, you must be there when we arrive. I wonder whether the Dunstons will be in town much this season—Sir Wilfrid says he does not think they have a house—anyhow, as I shall be keeping quiet, I should not be likely to see them."

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